THE ABBÉ PRÉVOST

AND

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

GEORGE R. HAVENS

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
JAN 26 1922

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(An incomplete reprint from the *Elliott Monographs*, No 9.)

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
WITHDRAWN

BALTIMORE
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS

1921

3781
J65H
UNCLASSED
Dissertation

ELLIOTT MONOGRAPHS

The Elliott Monographs are issued in series of three numbers, each series containing approximately three hundred pages. Price to subscribers: three dollars per series, payable on delivery of the first number of the series. Individual numbers may be purchased separately at the prices indicated below. Subscriptions, as well as orders for individual numbers and for back series, should be addressed to the **Princeton University Press**, Princeton, New Jersey.

FIRST SERIES

1. Flaubert's Literary Development in the Light of his *Mémoires d'un fou*, *Novembre*, and *Éducation sentimentale*, by A. Coleman. 1914. xv + 154 pp. $1.50.
2. Sources and Structure of Flaubert's *Salammbô*, by P. B. Fay and A. Coleman. 1914. 55 pp. 75 cents.
3. La Composition de *Salammbô*, d'après la correspondance de Flaubert, par F.-A. Blossom. 1914. ix + 104 pp. $1.25.

SECOND SERIES

4. Sources of the Religious Element in Flaubert's *Salammbô*, by Arthur Hamilton. 1917. xi + 123 pp. $1.25.
5. Étude sur *Pathelin*, par Richard T. Holbrook. 1917. ix + 115 pp. $1.25.
6. *Libro de Apolonio*, an Old Spanish Poem, edited by C. Carroll Marden. Part I. Introduction and Text, 1917. lvii + 76 pp. $1.50.

THIRD SERIES

7. The Syntactical Causes of Case Reduction in Old French, by G. G. Laubscher. 1921. xi + 120 pp. $1.50.
8. Honoré de Balzac and his Figures of Speech, by J. M. Burton. 1921. vii + 98 pp. $1.00.
9. The Abbé Prévost and English Literature, by George R. Havens. 1921. xi + 135 pp. $1.50.

THE ABBÉ PRÉVOST

AND

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

GEORGE R. HAVENS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(An incomplete reprint from the *Elliott Monographs*, No 9.)

BALTIMORE
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
—
1921

CHAPTER I

PRÉVOST IN ENGLAND

The relatively little that is known of the life of the Abbé Prévost is due almost entirely to the careful, painstaking study of Henry Harrisse. How indispensable is his work, becomes clear as soon as one reads any study of Prévost prepared without that aid, as for instance M. Anatole France's essay in *le Génie latin*[1]. It seems that, unless the future brings the improbable good fortune of the discovery of new documents, Harrisse has done all that can be done to reconstitute the troubled life of the Abbé. It is unfortunate that of the most important epoch of his whole eventful career, his sojourn in England, we know almost nothing in detail. For this study particularly, it is desirable to gather together the little we do know of that period, the more since Harrisse, though furnishing the documents, has not woven them into a detailed and connected narrative. M. Schrœder has performed well that task, but not quite from the same point of view as that which interests us here.

What had been the chief events of Prévost's life before this important period? Student, twice soldier[2], novice, teacher, priest[3], he had given proof of great uncertainty, not to say fickleness, as to his vocation, and of a disposition "vif et sensible au plaisir[4]." He had been in Holland in 1719[5], and then, as later, unpleasant stories, most improbable in their exaggeration, had been circulated about him. Dom Dupuis,

1. Anatole France, "les Aventures de l'Abbé Prévost," *le Génie latin*, pp. 179-206.
2. H. Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, pp. 95-96.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 103-04, 113-14.
4. *Pour et Contre*, IV, p. 38.
5. Harrisse, pp. 96-97.

however, a biographer whom Harrisse considers in general as worthy of confidence, alludes to these stories without committing himself beyond implying that Prévost, according to accepted standards, had in no way dishonored himself, and for the rest gives a very favorable, but by no means improbable, picture. " L'heureuse physionomie dont la nature l'avait favorisé, la douceur de son caractère, les progrès qu'il avait déjà faits dans les belles-lettres, lui ouvrirent la porte des meilleures maisons. Il s'y distingua même par plusieurs productions d'esprit, soit en vers, soit en prose [1]. " Whatever Manons he may have encountered on his way, we know that he returned to France not later than early in November, 1720 [2], very much overwhelmed by a love affair, in one way or another unfortunate. Replying in the *Pour et Contre* to the stories of Gordon de Percel (Lenglet-Dufresnoy), Prévost says with his customary candor : " Je laisse à juger quels devoient être depuis l'âge de vingt jusqu'à vingt-cinq ans, le cœur et les sentimens d'un homme qui a composé le Cléveland à trente-cinq ou trente-six. La malheureuse fin d'un engagement trop tendre me conduisit enfin au *Tombeau ;* c'est le nom que je donne à l'Ordre respectable où j'allai m'ensevelir, et où je demeurai quelque tems si bien mort, que mes parens et mes amis ignorèrent ce que j'étois devenu [3]. " This is at any rate the tone of frankness and explains, if it does not excuse, the unfortunate issue of the vows taken before the Benedictines of Saint-Maur the ninth of November, 1721, " avec, " as he innocently wrote ten years later, " toutes les restrictions intérieures qui pouvoient m'autoriser à les rompre [4]. "

At Saint-Maur, at Saint-Ouen, at Notre-Dame-du-Bec, at the Abbey of Fécamp, at Saint-Germer, at Evreux, at Séez, at the monastery of the Blancs-Manteaux in Paris, Prévost found the next six years certainly full of changes. Finally, late in

1. Cited by Harrisse, pp. 96-97.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
3. PC., IV, 38-39.
4. Letter from The Hague, Nov. 10, 1731, cited by Harrisse, p. 163.

1727 or about the beginning of 1728 [1], he entered the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés [2], bringing with him probably, since the approbation was accorded the fifth of April, 1728 [3], the first two volumes of the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*, composed in that case at the Blancs-Manteaux or at Evreux [4]. The licence to print was granted the sixteenth of April [5].

At Saint-Germain Prévost was not happy. He was put to work at the *Gallia Christiana* and, though Harrisse has modified his earlier opinion that his work was limited to copying notes, correcting proofs, and translating into Latin what older collaborators had already written in French [6], yet it is not likely that the task was gay. The story that he wrote alone almost one whole volume of the *Gallia* is, as Harrisse observes, entirely improbable [7]. In any event, whatever the character of the work, it was wholly unsuited to his ardent imagination, already filled with the novel he had in part composed and was evidently continuing, since the third and fourth volumes were approved the nineteenth of November following [8]. The very composition of these novels [9] recalled perforce all the memories of his wanderings and his loves, and made him long to return to the freer, undisciplined life outside. Then too his relations with the other members of the order were not agreeable. It is only necessary to read the satirical sketches traced of them, not bitterly but none the less with keenness and precision, in the third volume of the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité* [10], to see how little these men were fitted to be con-

1. Harrisse, pp. 116-17.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 125.
4. *Loc. cit.*
5. *Loc. cit.*
6. *Op. cit.*, pp. 117-19. For the corrected opinion, see Harrisse, *la Vie monastique de l'abbé Prévost*, pp. 29-30.
7. Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, pp. 117-19.
8. *Op. cit.*, p. 142.
9. The *Mémoires* are rather a series of separate narratives than a connected whole.
10. Cited by Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, pp. 120-24.

genial companions for him. Not that it is necessary to attach great weight to Prévost's complaints in his letter of the eighteenth of October, 1728, to Dom Thibaut, General Superior of the congregation of Saint-Maur at Saint-Germain-des-Prés[1]. "J'ai eu chez vous," he says, "de justes sujets de chagrin... Par quel malheur est-il donc arrivé qu'on n'a jamais cessé de me regarder avec défiance dans la congrégation, qu'on m'a soupçonné plus d'une fois des trahisons les plus noires, et qu'on m'en a toujours cru capable, lors même que l'évidence n'a pas permis qu'on m'en accusât[2]?" Doubtless, between average, matter-of-fact men like the other members of the congregation and an ardent, mercurial, free spirit like Prévost's there had been many misunderstandings, perhaps even meannesses on the one side, and strong provocation on the other. Between the ordinary man, usually deeply occupied with what are called the practical affairs of life, and the genius, more often than not extremely careless of those same practicalities, an *entente cordiale* is rarely possible. Prévost of course ought never to have been in the order. And then too, without doubting in the least that he wrote his letter in good faith, I do not see what in his past life could have justified his fellow members in granting him complete confidence, and perhaps they were not altogether wrong in suspecting a brother who by his own later admission entered the order only with a mental reservation which he considered a justification for his leaving it as soon as he thought wise. One remembers also how the characters of *Cléveland*, if often they were trustful to a degree bordering on simple-mindedness, at other times were no less foolishly suspicious without cause. Perhaps Prévost, in this also a forerunner of Rousseau, imagined ills which did not exist, or rather, which existed in less degree by far. However that may be, he decided to leave Saint-Germain-des-Prés and to pass into a milder branch of the order of Saint Benedict, where he could leave the

1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 138-39.
2. Cited by Harrisse, pp. 134 ff.

Gallia behind him and choose " un genre d'étude plus conforme à son génie, " as Dom Dupuis tells us [1].

Willing to comply with the forms, Prévost applied to the Pope and obtained a Brief of Translation, which Mgr. Sabbathier, the Bishop of Amiens, was to " fulminate. " In his *Pour et Contre* Prévost gives interesting information as to his mental state at this time. " Le sentiment me revint, et je reconnus que ce cœur si vif étoit encore brûlant sous la cendre. La perte de ma liberté m'affligea jusqu'aux larmes. Il étoit trop tard. Je cherchai ma consolation pendant cinq ou six ans dans les charmes de l'étude. Mes livres étoient mes amis fidèles ; mais ils étoient morts comme moi. Enfin, je pris occasion d'un petit mécontentement, et je me retirai [2]. " Here, it seems, is the real reason for his departure, the lack of a true vocation, not an actual grievance of any seriousness. Thus, in 1734, after his feelings have had time to cool, he is much nearer the truth than in his letter to Dom Thibaut, and says that he merely used the " petit mécontentement " as a pretext to satisfy what had long been his desire [3].

But, his Brief of Translation granted, Prévost was guilty of an indiscretion due to his burning impatience to have done once and for all with Saint-Germain-des-Prés. He left without waiting for the " fulmination, " which he had every reason to think would take place at once, but which was delayed owing to a real or pretended suspicion of the sincerity of his intentions. Efforts were made to induce him to return peaceably, but Prévost, once free, had no desire to give up his

1. Cited by Harrisse, p. 132.

2. PC., IV, 39.

3. He goes on to say in the rest of the passage : " Quoique l'amour de la liberté m'ait fait quitter la France, la Flèche et Saint-Germain, où j'ai fait mon séjour, sont des noms chers à ma mémoire. La conduite que j'y ai tenue, ne me laisse à craindre aucun reproche, et les bontez qu'on y a eues pour moi excitent encore ma plus vive reconnaissance. " PC., IV, 39-40. Otherwise a very significant passage, its value is much lessened by the fact that it is written at London when Prévost was no doubt willing to placate the authorities and obtain freedom to return in peace to France.

newly recovered liberty. As a result the fathers notified the police and demanded his arrest, complaining that " il se promène impunément tous les jours dans Paris [1]. " Prévost did not continue his walks in Paris. Remembering no doubt the precedent set by the Protestant refugees ever since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes forty years before, remembering also Voltaire's departure only a little more than two years previously [2], he set his face toward England. On the sixth of November, 1728, a *lettre de cachet* was issued against him. His departure took place soon after he received news of the government's action [3].

The position of England as the refuge for the oppressed and as the seeming realization of all the fond dreams of political and religious liberty cherished by the eighteenth century is too well known to be insisted upon. M. Schrœder has developed this in connection with Prévost [4], but perhaps with somewhat too much emphasis upon his unquestioning enthusiasm for things English and his delight in the free presentation of unorthodox views of religion. " Mais ce qui l'étonna et le charma, je crois, plus que tout le reste, " says M. Schrœder, " ce fut la libre discussion des doctrines religieuses. Certes, lui, le moine défroqué, le bénédictin en rupture de ban, il a dû lire avec passion le *Discours sur la liberté de pensée* que Collins avait publié une vingtaine d'années auparavant (1713), et le *Christianisme sans mystère* de Toland, qui, paru à la fin du dix-septième siècle, avait été condamné au feu par le parlement de Dublin [5]. " This matter of Prévost's religious attitude well merits a separate study, without which it would be rash to express too definite an

1. Harrisse, p. 140.
2. Voltaire arrived in England probably the thirtieth of May, 1726. See J. Churton Collins, *Voltaire, Montesquieu et Rousseau en Angleterre*, 1911, p. 7. M. Foulet sets the date as late as August 15, 1726. *Revue d'Histoire litt. de la France*, 1906, p. 19.
3. Harrisse, pp. 141-42.
4. *L'abbé Prévost*, Chap. II.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

opinion. However, attention may be called to the fact that whenever the Abbé mentions the deists in the *Pour et Contre*, it is to comment upon them unfavorably. " Ne parlons que du célèbre *Toland*. Que d'erreurs et d'absurdités ne trouve-t-on pas dans les œuvres d'un homme qui s'est fait un si grand nom parmi les Anglois ? Et s'il a eu pendant sa vie le bonheur d'imposer jusques dans ses livres, quelle impression ne devoit-il pas faire dans les conversations particulières [1] ? " This was in the last volume ; already in the first he had spoken of " toutes les impiétez et les rêveries antichrétiennes des *Tolands*, des *Collins*, des *Voolstons*, des *Tyndales*, etc. [2] " Other passages in the same tone might be cited [3]. They seem the sincere expression of a man who might indeed have found the confinement of the monastery insupportable, who might have had his moments of large tolerance [4], but who was none the less firmly set against the deistic movement in general, which he thought to be simply a deliberately malicious attempt to undermine religious orthodoxy. It is true that there is the ever present possibility that this attitude may have been dictated by prudential reasons, but the burden of proof is on him who would read into the text the opposite of what it says. *Cléveland* shows unquestionable traces of deistic influence, even though Prévost announced in the preface his anti-deistic aim. If, however, the hero's conversion seems to-day far from convincing, no doubt it appeared quite otherwise to its author and to many of his readers. M. Anátole France is probably correct in calling Prévost " le moins philosophe des hommes [5], "

1. PC., XX, 310-11.
2. *Ibid.*, I, 227.
3. On Tyndal, *cf.* PC., I, 265 ; III, 318-19 ; IV, 66-67 ; on Collins, see PC., XII, 314 ; on Woolston, PC., I, 49-58 ; on Chubb, PC., XVI, 13-14.
4. See *Cléveland*, Book IV (*Œuvres*, V, pp. 164 ff.) on the natural religion Cléveland teaches the Abaquis.
5. *Le Génie latin*, p. 189. For a similar opinion see Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits littéraires*, I, pp. 273-74. Cf. MHQ., II, 303, on the death of Saint-Evremond. " C'est ainsi que les plus grands hommes s'aveuglent malheureusement dans l'affaire la plus importante..., je veux dire l'intérêt éternel de leur âme." Probably, though not certainly, Prévost

taking "philosophe" in the eighteenth-century sense. To his mention of Prévost's belief in miracles and prophetic dreams, M. France might well have added his naïve confidence in the "paquets du Sieur Arnould" as an infallible means, not simply of curing, but of warding off in advance, attacks of apoplexy, and his evident pleasure in returning to the subject and in defending it against attacks[1]. Prévost's was a spirit to which religion would appeal much as it did to Rousseau's, and it was hardly probable that rationalistic attacks would have a considerable effect upon his beliefs, though doubtless they would still further encourage his natural tendency toward toleration. To be dogmatic was foreign to his character. In the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*[2], after speaking of the political liberty which the English enjoy, he continues: "La religion n'y est pas moins libre. Les Anglois ont reconnu que la contrainte est un attentat contre l'esprit de l'évangile. Ils savent que le cœur des hommes est le domaine de Dieu; que la violence ne produit que des changements extérieurs; qu'un culte forcé est un culte sacrilège qui perd celui qui l'exige et celui qui le rend... Je suis... ce que je crois devoir être en matière de religion. Ce n'est ni le nom de catholique ni le nom de protestant qui me détermine, c'est la connoissance de la vérité que je crois avoir acquise il y a longtemps par la faveur du ciel et par mes réflexions[3]." This is indeed the attitude of a man of intelligent and liberal spirit, but is not necessarily in contradiction with his seeming detestation of the deists.

Our information as to Prévost's stay in England is slight indeed. We are perhaps justified in concluding from the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité* that he left France from

was sincere in this passage. But note that from the first number of the *Pour et Contre* the censor cut "ce qui concerne les affaires ecclésiastiques" (cf. *infra*, p. 23). This makes Prévost's position again doubtful, cf. *infra*, p. 40.

1. PC., VII, 308-12; X, 135-41.
2. *Œuvres*, II, 393.
3. *Id.*, p. 393 and p. 395.

Calais and crossed to Dover; that thence he proceeded by land to Gravesend, where he embarked on the Thames and landed at the foot of the Tower in London [1]. His apartment, like that of his hero, was perhaps in Suffolk Street [2]. No doubt he shortly found his way into the coffee houses, especially the Rainbow, where, as Sayous notes [3] in connection with Voltaire, French refugees had long been accustomed to gather. There Prévost, always a polite and pleasant companion, as Rousseau among others later noted [4], could not fail to find at once friends ready to guide him in his first efforts to learn the language and the literature. Sayous refers to a supposed dispute between Voltaire and the Abbé Prévost, in regard to money due the former from certain subscriptions to the *Henriade* [5]. The whole affair has to do with another Prévost, a London bookseller. In fact it dates from March 1728 [6], and the Abbé, as we already know, did not arrive in England till November of the same year. Probably it was through friends made at the Rainbow that Prévost obtained a position as tutor to the son of an English nobleman. He no doubt had need of money, then as all his life. This nobleman, given in the *Mémoires du chevalier de Ravanne* simply as the "chevalier Ey...", is perhaps, as Harrisse suggests, Sir Robert Eyre, knighted in 1710, who died in 1735 leaving three sons [7]. With him, the same memoirs testify, Prévost enjoyed "tous les agrémens possibles [8]." Thanks to this titled acquaintance he was able, according to his letter to Dom Clément de la Rue from The Hague, November 10, 1731, to move in "les meilleures compagnies de Londres [9]." It is at this same time that he began

1. *Œuvres*, II, pp. 244-45.
2. *Id.*, p. 246.
3. Sayous, *le Dix-huitième siècle à l'étranger*, I, p. 21.
4. *Œuvres de Rousseau*. Hachette, 1862, Vol. V, p. 578 (*Confessions*).
5. Sayous, Vol. I, p. 21, note 1.
6. Collins, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79.
7. Harrisse, p. 143, note 1.
8. *Id.*, p. 143.
9. *Id.*, p. 161.

to go to the theater, for Mrs. Oldfield, whose acting charmed him so much, died in 1730.

Some time during this first stay in England Prévost made an extended trip through the southern part of the island, for of it he gives an account in the continuation of the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*, which appeared in 1731. It is not at all improbable that it was a journey taken in the company of his youthful charge. In fact it is unlikely, in spite of the recent sale of the first four volumes of his novel, that the Abbé would have been able otherwise to afford it. It seems most reasonable to conclude that in this case he is largely autobiographical. Certainly as an agreeable Mentor, enjoying himself well at Tunbridge and at Bath, present at mascarades, mingling at dances, and well received and entertained everywhere, Prévost would have been very much in character. His account gives the impression of dealing with things seen and not of being a mere compilation from a guide-book, but the descriptions lack color and visual detail. It is too early in the century, however, to expect this to be otherwise. Prévost's route took him from Tunbridge down to the south coast, where, to mention only the principal places, he visited Hastings, Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth[1], the tin and copper mines of Cornwall, then turned north to Bristol, Bath, Oxford, Windsor, and back to London. Later he mentions passing through Canterbury. Thus he has made a circuit which takes him through all the southern part of England, but, with the exception of the detour to visit Oxford, has apparently not gone north of London at all[2].

Prévost's opinion of the English character, as he expressed it in the *Mémoires* at various times, was in the main very favorable. Perhaps M. Schrœder has tended to give a somewhat erroneous impression, however, by placing in his text one of

1. At Stanehouse, near Plymouth, he found a colony of poor French refugees supported in comparative comfort by the generosity of an English nobleman named Hedgecombe. *Œuvres*, II, 367-68.
2. *Id.*, 244-391.

the most enthusiastic passages and by relegating to the notes the following saner and more balanced judgment : " Il n'y a point de pays où l'on trouve tant de droiture, tant d'humanité, des idées si justes d'honneur, de sagesse et de félicité que parmi les Anglois. L'amour du bien public, le goût des sciences solides, l'horreur de l'esclavage et de la flatterie sont des vertus presque naturelles à ces peuples heureux ; elles passent de père en fils comme un héritage. Mais il ne faut chercher les Anglois dont je parle, ni parmi la populace, qui est trop grossière et trop féroce en Angleterre pour être capable de ces grands sentiments, ni parmi la jeunesse, qui y est d'ordinaire extrêmement libertine. Ce n'est que dans un certain âge, et dans une certaine élévation au-dessus du commun, qu'on aperçoit le vrai caractère des Anglois : si vous les regardez dans ce point de vue, j'ose vous répondre que plus vous viendrez à les connoître, plus vous vous accoutumerez à les estimer comme un des premiers peuples de l'univers[1]. " As he has begun with this passage, Prévost can later take it for granted and, if he seems to speak with unreserved enthusiasm, he has in mind only the Englishmen who belong to the very limited class defined above. It appears then that Prévost has seen and judged accurately without over-enthusiasm. As for Montesquieu, praised as having seen through the mask and judged England with so much greater penetration than either Voltaire or Prévost[2], it is not out of place to make the observation that it is no less a lack of insight to see only the dark side and to find nothing worthy of praise, than it is possibly to err somewhat on the side of charity and enthusiasm.

On the literary side, what new conditions would Prévost meet, fresh from France, where, the memory of the " grand siècle " still largely dominant, the new century had not yet found its way? The age of Dryden was past, though his influence was not. The new age was one of gradually in-

1. *Œuvres*, II, 258-59. *Cf.* Schrœder, pp. 41-42, and p. 40, note 1.
2. *Id.*, pp. 45-46.

creasing freedom and independence for literary men. No longer must they rely entirely upon the pensions accorded by noblemen in return for flattery. Pope, as Beljame has shown [1], was the first really independent man of letters making his living wholly by the receipts from the sale of his books. Dryden before him had been obliged to seek pensions ; Addison, the next author of first rank, had been rewarded by a post under the government, as other authors of his time had also been — or if not, then, like Swift, had sought to be ; but Pope refused all aids and relied solely on his pen : he alone forecasts the modern age. It is worth while to recall that Prévost likewise, when he returned to France, supported himself by his writing. His position with the Prince de Conti paid him, unlike some other sinecures of the time and since, nothing.

It was in England a period of increasing morality in literature. The wild licence of the Restoration drama — essentially a court drama — had taken little hold upon the people. Objectors had been found to its immorality even before Jeremy Collier, relying for his arguments upon the critic Rymer, pressed home the attack in his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698). The violence and fierceness of his warfare were equal to the greatness of the evil and were so effective as to force *amende honorable* even from the aged Dryden, the literary lord of his age [2]. It is doubtful, nevertheless, whether Collier would have had any such effect, out of all proportion to his intrinsic merits, if the people as a whole had not supported the reform. As a matter of fact the bloodless revolution of 1688 had brought new liberty, not only in politics, but also in literature. Newspapers were beginning to be published and read. With the next

1. Beljame, *Le public et les hommes de lettres en Angleterre*, 2e éd. 1897.

2. But " the plays denounced by Collier continued to hold the stage, though more or less expurgated, throughout the century. Comedy did not become decent. " Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 62. *Cf.* later the constant criticisms of Prévost regarding the indecencies of English comedy.

century came the periodicals of Addison and Steele, and these meant a wider reading public and worked also toward the reform of manners. Steele and later Lillo [1] popularized a moralizing element in the drama, which, though not of the highest literary merit, is most significant and is to be reckoned with. Richardson in the novel is part of the same movement, and Prévost, we recall, is the translator of Richardson. The new age was a people's age and took itself seriously. As such it was an age particularly of literary criticism [2]. The new public was anxious to be taught the way it should go in things literary.

The period of classicism in English literature by no means began with the return of the cavaliers under Charles II [3]. Contemporary with Shakespear, the romantic, had been Ben Jonson, the classicist, and, in his quality of literary dictator, he had formed a school. The Restoration had but strengthened a tendency which, for the simple reason that genius to support the other side was lacking, had already become dominant. It is during this period that Dryden's becomes the prevailing voice in criticism. He belongs, not to any particular school, but to all [4]. His tendency is, now classic, now romantic, but usually he is a large free spirit, erring and changing often in the application of his principles to individual cases, but inclined generally to be open-minded and appreciative, a worthy father of later schools. Contemporary with him was Thomas Rymer, whom Macaulay and Professor Saintsbury have called "the worst critic that ever lived [5]," but who was none the less in his time a mighty force, inspiring the method of Collier's attacks and lending Voltaire, "not only the startling vocabulary of abuse but the critical method with which the

1. In *George Barnwell or the London Merchant*, 1731.
2. Paul Hamelius, *Die Kritik in der englischen Literatur des siebzehnten und achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, p. 69.
3. *Id.*, p. 184.
4. *Id.*, p. 63.
5. Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. I, Introd., p. LXXX.

great Frenchman attacked Shakespear [1]." Pope admired him, though he admired Shakespear too, whom Rymer attacked. The reason for this seeming anomaly is that under classicism a man's position as a critic depended, not on his individual dicta, but on his general principles and doctrine [2]. Rymer's criticism by precept and rule was fought by Saint-Evremond, who urged criticism by comparison [3]. Saint-Evremond and Fontenelle were at the end of the seventeenth century the chief exponents of the theory of the influence of climate upon literary canons of taste — an idea which was as old as Aristotle's time, but which had languished. Now it came to the fore and became gradually a reiterated slogan in the eighteenth century, after being taken up by the Abbé Du Bos and (thirty years later) by Montesquieu [4]. From Saint-Evremond, Dryden got his interest in the theory, and not only Dryden, but also John Dennis [5], who in the early years of the eighteenth century was so important as to be called "*the* critic [6]." His preface to the Impartial Critick has been called "perhaps the best of the expositions of the effects of climate on the literary temper of a race; a hint from Saint-Evremond has furnished him with a suggestive explanation for the differences between Greek and English tragedy [7]." Dennis stood to his age "as the champion of emotion as the basis of poetry, as an advocate of the exaltation and inspiration of the poet that so ill accorded with the prevailing spirit of the times that he was derisively dubbed 'Sir Longinus' [8]." Dennis in fact undertook against Rymer to

1. Spingarn, p. LXXVIII.
2. *Id.*, p. LXXX.
3. *Id.*, pp. LXV-VI.
4. Brunetière, *l'Evolution des genres*, Vol. I, pp. 144-45. *Cf.* Alfred Lombard, *l'Abbé Du Bos, un initiateur de la pensée moderne*, p. 89.
5. Spingarn, *op. cit.*, p. CII.
6. "[Dennis'] reputation would have gained rather than lost, had he published nothing during his last fifteen years." H. G. Paul, *John Dennis*, 1911, p. 113.
7. Spingarn, p. CII.
8. Paul, p. 134.

prove that Shakespear was a "great genius[1]." Sir William Temple likewise with his broad interests did much to encourage a more liberal conception of literature as a growth depending much upon the conditions under which it is produced[2].

The gradual result of these liberalizing influences was to produce at the end of the seventeenth century what Professor Spingarn calls the "school of taste," which represents an advance from "a general and abstract treatment to the consideration of particular passages and details, from the criticism of 'faults' to that of 'beauties,' from the concept of reason to that of sentiment and taste[3]." Méré in France, with his insistence upon the supremacy of heart over mind in literary judgments, had championed it[4]; Bouhours and La Bruyère had adopted it, but only in a rationalized form which gave the primacy to reason after all[5] and invoked the same "bon sens" as Boileau. But in England at any rate the tendency found more favorable soil. There Saint-Evremond supported it with all his great influence[6]. Later Shaftesbury came to the fore as a representative of the same school[7].

The new attitude is reflected in the more liberal treatment of Shakespear by minor critics like Rowe and Gildon. In 1709-1710 the former published the first edition of Shakespear intended for general circulation, and in the first volume printed an Essay on the Life of William Shakespear. He definitely takes a stand against Rymer and shows real appreciation of the poet's genius. Gildon had two essays which were published in the same collection of Shakespear's works. The first is called An Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage in Greece, Rome and England, and the second, Remarks on the

1. Paul, p. 63.
2. *Id.*, p. 125.
3. Spingarn, p. cv.
4. Paul, p. 124.
5. Spingarn, p. xcviii.
6. *Id.*, p. xcvii.
7. *Id.*, p. cv.

Plays of Shakespear. Both of these also show appreciation of the English dramatist and sincere admiration for his "witchery," as Gildon expresses it, but he is much more hampered by the rules than Rowe and more occupied with blaming "faults." He is only partly free from the Rymer attitude.

Such were the tendencies in the air toward the end of the old century and the beginning of the new. It must not be imagined that the various movements were very distinctly separated nor that their adherents were necessarily conscious of the direction in which they were going. Gradually the different schools tended, as always, to come together into two[1] which correspond to the two ever existent types of mind, the romantic and the classic.

It was at this time that Addison came into prominence. Addison "vit — ce que ses prédécesseurs avaient seulement entrevu — que le journal littéraire avait un rôle spécial à jouer et une influence nouvelle à exercer sur la société qui l'environnait[2]." It is in this sense that we may say with Beljame: "Addison a inauguré . . . la critique littéraire[3]." He gathered up the leading tendencies of his age and gave them wide circulation among an average reading public unknown to Dryden and his contemporaries. Mr. Saudé notes that the circulation of the Spectator went as high as 14,000 copies a day[4]. Addison recognized the rights of the "natural genius," not merely to be tolerated occasionally as the exception, but to be admitted alongside of the "genius formed by rules." He popularized Milton[5]; along with Steele he led an active propaganda in favor of Shakespear, who it is true had, as Hettner has recalled[6] and Mr. Hamelius likewise[7], not

1. Hamelius, p. 70.
2. Beljame, p. 278.
3. *Id.*, p. 311.
4. Emile Saudé, *Die Grundlagen der literarischen Kritik bei Joseph Addison*, p. 62.
5. Charlanne, *l'Influence française en Angleterre*, p. 566. Dennis had appreciated Milton before Addison, but his influence was less.
6. Hettner, Vol. I, p. 75.
7. Hamelius, p. 111.

been forgotten under the reign of Charles II, but who had suffered many perversions and inexcusable "adaptations[1]," Othello and Hamlet being almost the only plays which escaped[2]. So Addison did valuable service here. He also turned the eyes of his contemporaries toward medieval ballads, thus forecasting Percy and Scott[3]. A noteworthy sign of one sort of liberality is the mention of a girl who with "a natural sense" is "a better judge than a thousand critics[4]." In fragmentary fashion he popularized the historical viewpoint in literary criticism[5] and used at times the comparative method[6], which had been advocated as early as Bacon and more recently by Saint-Evremond[7].

Addison's success produced a great many papers and periodicals, more or less closely imitating the Spectator and the Tatler. At the time when Prévost came to England, there were many of these journals in circulation and the number was rapidly increasing. "Ils sont tellement à la mode," says Prévost, "que le nombre en augmente tous les jours[8]," but he thinks that, having multiplied so rapidly, they cannot fail soon to decline[9]. He even gives a brief sketch of the origin and development of English journalism, according naturally a place of special importance to the productions of Steele and Addison[10]. Among those periodicals treated with some detail in the *Pour et Contre* are the *Grubstreet Journal*, the *London Tatler*, the *Universal Spectator*, the *Bee*, the *Weekly Miscellany*, and the *Auditor;* many others are mentioned only,

1. Charlanne, pp. 568-72.
2. *Id.*, pp. 570-71.
3. Saudé, p. 63.
4. *Id.*, p. 11. Cf. Musset, "Après une lecture," *Poésies nouvelles* :

   Et, que tous les pédants frappent leur tête creuse,
   Vive le mélodrame où Margot a pleuré !

5. Hamelius, p. 93.
6. Saudé, p. 14.
7. See *supra*, p. 14.
8. PC., I, 68.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
10. PC., XIX, pp. 297-300.

such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* [1], the *Craftsman* [2], etc. Prévost was obviously impressed by the number and variety of these publications in England as compared with France, and it was most natural that it should occur to him to found something of a similar nature in his own country. His respect for Addison and Steele as journalists is obvious [3]; it was a magazine of the better sort that he wished to found, giving, like them, particular attention to things literary. Of this more will be said later. Here it is sufficient to note that one of the most important results of Prévost's English sojourn was the idea of producing a literary magazine such as the *Pour et Contre*.

The time of Prévost's arrival in England was especially favorable. The classic tendency had been aided by the introduction of French influence after the Restoration. In the end, though not immediately, this influence was beneficial. The English genius had need of pruning from Elizabethan youthful freedom. Moreover, the very deformation in part of English literary taste was necessary in order to make possible the entry in turn of English influence into France and in order to make there effective the vivifying tendency of English romanticism. In this wise, through France as intermediary, English literature was able to become European. The age of Pope made it possible ultimately, and perhaps sooner than otherwise would have been the case, to know in France the age of Shakespear also.

Prévost's English journeys came when the so-called Augustan period was nearing its close. Addison had died in 1719. Steele died in 1729, the same year as Congreve; Defoe in 1731; the critic, John Dennis, in 1734. Pope (1688-1744) and Swift (1667-1745) reigned supreme. Yet all of Pope's

1. Several times mentioned and quoted later, however.
2. One whole number translated later, but of a political, not of a literary, character. These references occur: PC., I, pp. 44-46, 33, and 258.
3. PC., I, pp. 69-70.

important work had been published, except the Essay on Man, and that came out anonymously before Prévost's return to France, three epistles in 1732-33 and a fourth in 1734. Swift's Tale of a Tub had appeared in 1704 and Gulliver's Travels in 1726. Thus his important work was done and, though he lived fifteen years thereafter, old age and sickness were heavy upon him. Robinson Crusoe had appeared in 1719[1], Defoe's other novels during the twenties. In this connection it should be noted that Prévost makes no mention of Defoe nor of his work, either in the *Pour et Contre* or, as far as I have been able to discover, anywhere else. The fact that Robinson Crusoe was known in France from the time of its translation in 1720 is no explanation, since Prévost talked of other works which were generally known, the Spectator for instance. Given his keen taste for voyages, real or imaginary, there is no work which one would more readily expect to find him mentioning frequently and favorably. But, compared with Addison, Steele, Swift, and Pope, Defoe was socially only a poor scribbler, widely popular with the general reader but looked down upon by the aristocrats of letters. It may be that in this fact we find the reason for Prévost's neglect. In any case it seems that one must hesitate before concluding that Defoe influenced the French novelist, as M. Schrœder[2] and Mr. F. B. Bury[3] have thought. It is quite possible that there was such influence. It is probable enough that Prévost knew in England the translator of Robinson Crusoe, Thémiseul de Saint-Hyacinthe, but as yet we have no definite indication on which to base any positive conclusions.

The chief literary events during the actual period of Prévost's stay in England were: Gay's Beggar's Opera, which had a long run in 1728; Pope's Dunciad, which appeared the

1. Not "une vingtaine d'années avant l'arrivée de Prévost en Angleterre," as M. Schrœder has stated (p. 36, note 1).
2. P. 36.
3. "The Abbé Prévost in England", *Scottish Review*, 1899, p. 38 and p. 49.

same year; Swift's terrible satire which is called A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to their Parents or the Country, in 1729; Tindal's Christianity as Old as the Creation, in 1730; and, in the same year, the founding of the Grub Street Journal and the appearance of Thompson's Seasons[1]; in 1731, one of Swift's best poems, On the Death of Dr. Swift[2], the appearance of the Gentleman's Magazine, and Lillo's great success, George Barnwell or the London Merchant; finally, in 1733-34, Pope's Essay on Man. One notes again with surprise that Thompson's work, the forerunner of romanticism, seems not to have impressed Prévost particularly. In vague and purely conventional fashion he mentions Prior, Addison, Thompson, as authors " qui ne sont inférieurs en rien aux meilleurs poètes de tous les temps " and as " noms chéris des Muses, et admirés de ceux qui connoissent le prix de leurs ouvrages[3]. "

M. Schrœder states that Prévost left England for The Hague in 1729[4], but there is some uncertainty about the exact date of his departure, and M. Schrœder does not discuss the matter. Harrisse was at first of the opinion that Prévost returned to Holland probably not later than January, 1731[5], and perhaps as early as December, 1730. In his later work on the *Vie monastique de l'abbé Prévost*, he has altered slightly his conclusions. Prévost's letter of the tenth of November, 1731, to Dom Clément de la Rue contains the following passage: " C'est avec beaucoup de chagrin que je me suis vu privé ici du plaisir de voir Dom Thuillier. Je n'appris son arrivée qu'après son départ, et je suis très affligé d'entendre dire à plusieurs personnes qu'il étoit parti avec l'opinion que

1. *Winter* had been published in March, 1726; *Summer* was composed in 1727, and *Spring* in 1728. *Autumn* and a final *Hymn to Nature* appeared in the edition of 1730.

2. A pirated and incomplete version appeared in 1733, and an authorized copy in 1739. *Cambridge History*, IX, p. 137.

3. MHQ., II, p. 282.

4. Schrœder, p. 50.

5. Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, pp. 151-70.

je l'avois évité à dessein de lui parler et de le voir. Le Ciel m'est témoin que c'eût été pour moi une très vive satisfaction ; et que j'ai fort regreté de l'avoir perdue. Quelle raison aurois-je eu de le fuir ? Je vis, grâces au Ciel, sans reproche. Tel en Hollande qu'à Paris[1]. " The time of Dom Thuillier's journey is important for our purpose. From Harrisse's further investigations it results that, according to the temporary annalist of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Dom Martine, the journey was made in the fall of 1730. Dom Thuillier left Brussels the eighteenth of September, arrived at Rotterdam on the twentieth, and stayed a week. From there he went on to The Hague where, as Harrisse thinks, he remained during the first week of October. From Prévost's brief account of his translation of De Thou's history, Harrisse deduces the time of the Abbé's return from England. The task of the translation was first proposed to him in France, and Prévost continues: " Étant passé ensuite en Angleterre, la même proposition me fut renouvelée presque aussitôt... Deux ans s'écoulent, je viens en Hollande et j'y suis à peine arrivé que les propos renaissent[2]. " Harrisse therefore concludes: " C'est dans la première quinzaine de novembre 1728 que Prévost passa de France en Angleterre. Les deux années qui s'écoulent nous reportent donc à novembre 1730, comme date de sa présence à La Haye. Dom Thuillier en était parti depuis environ trois semaines. De là les regrets très sincères de Prévost[3]. " However, it seems uncertain that Prévost's two years were intended to be taken quite so literally. Three weeks more or less would mean nothing where only approximate accuracy was probably intended. Furthermore, if at the time of Dom Thuillier's presence at The Hague Prévost was not yet back from England, why should the former not have known of the fact? On the contrary, he evidently believed that Prévost was back on the continent, for he left the city

1. Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, p. 162.
2. Cited by Harrisse, *la Vie monastique de l'Abbé Prévost*, pp. 39-40.
3. *Id.*, p. 40.

thinking that the Abbé was intentionally avoiding him. Finally, if Prévost had not been in Holland, he would certainly have said so in his letter to De la Rue, for that fact would have constituted an excuse absolutely satisfactory and convincing, whereas he is able to state only : " Je n'appris son arrivée qu'après son départ. " If Dom Thuillier thought he had reason to doubt Prévost's friendship and complete good faith, — and he evidently did think so, — then this excuse would appear to him much weaker and more doubtful than the other. So it seems reasonable to differ from Harrisse to the extent of thinking it probable that Prévost was at The Hague during the latter part of September or the first part of October, 1730, but hardly much earlier in view of the two years which Prévost mentions as the duration of his first English visit. Thus his stay in England was of almost exactly the same length as Voltaire's had been [1]. During this first visit he had learned the language, attended the theater and become acquainted with the literature. He had composed *Cléveland* (most of the first four volumes), Volumes V and VI of the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*, and possibly *Manon Lescaut* [2]. He had toured most of southern England, been well received and made friends with whom he continued to keep in touch after his return [3]. In short it had been a pleasant and active period in his life.

1. Voltaire's visit lasted slightly less than two years, according to M. L. Foulet, who, in the *Revue d'Histoire litt. de la France* (1906, p. 19), dates his arrival in England as August 15, 1726, and his return to France as the beginning of August, 1728. According to Mr. Churton Collins (*Voltaire... en Angleterre*, 1911, p. 7 and p. 109), Voltaire arrived in England probably May 30, 1726, and departed March 20 or 23, 1729. Cf. *infra*, p. 106, note 2.

2. This is the opinion of Harrisse, *Vie monastique*, p. 17. On p. 26 he admits the possibility of the hypothesis that *Manon Lescaut* might have been composed at the Abbey of Saint-Ouen (1722-23), while the memory of the real Manon was freshest in his mind. Cf. my article, " The Date of Composition of *Manon Lescaut*, " *Modern Language Notes*, Vol., XXXIII, pp. 150-54. In the absence of positive proof it seems that the balance of probability leans slightly toward the hypothesis that the masterpiece was composed at Saint-Ouen rather than in the already well-filled English period.

3. Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, p. 161.

In January 1733[1], Prévost made a second journey to England. In the *Pour et Contre* he explains his departure vaguely. "Diverses raisons," he says, "m'ayant porté quelques mois après à quitter La Haye pour repasser en Angleterre[2]." Harrisse has shown the untruth or malicious exaggeration in the various stories circulated about Prévost's departure "avec une suivante," etc. What part the "demoiselle de mérite et de naissance," as Prévost himself calls her [3], may have had in his decision to leave Holland we do not know. It is quite probable, however, that reason for his departure may have existed in the debts which he himself acknowledged and which were due to his generosity. "C'est une chose assez connue, que ma fortune a toujours surpassé mes besoins, et que j'avois peu d'embarras à craindre pour moi-même, si j'eusse été moins sensible à ceux d'autrui[4]." Nor for this trait of character are we dependent only upon his own testimony[5].

Once having arrived in London and with his pressing need of money very much in his mind, Prévost, in whom no doubt the project had been germinating ever since his first visit, set himself almost at once to retrieve his fortune by the publication of the periodical, *Le Pour et Contre*. It was printed in Paris. The opening number was presented by Didot and approved the twenty-fourth of March, 1733, but only after the cutting out of "ce qui concerne les affaires ecclésiastiques." The privilege was of the seventeenth of June, and on the twenty-first the new periodical was mentioned by the *Journal de la Cour et de Paris* [6]. Toward the end of this year 1733, Prévost appealed to the Pope for pardon [7]. According to

1. Harrisse, *l'Abbé Prévost*, pp. 188-90.
2. PC., IV, 43.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
5. Even his enemy, Ravanne, on his own testimony never received anything but favors and loans from Prévost. Harrisse, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
6. Harrisse, pp. 209-10.
7. *Id.*, p. 221.

Harrisse's hypothesis, the Abbé returned to France secretly during the summer of 1734[1]. In any case a letter from Marais to Bouhier testifies to his being back in Paris by the eleventh of October with a brief of translation to Cluny. " Sa première visite a été chez madame de Tencin comme de raison[2]. "

Thus his second sojourn in England had lasted about a year and a half, from the beginning of 1733 to the middle of 1734. Altogether he had spent three years and a half on the other side of the Channel. His preparation for the task of popularization was excellent[3].

1. Harrisse, p. 228.
2. *Id.*, p. 229.
3. It may be interesting to note the most important plays presented during Prévost's residence in England, as given by Genest, Vol. III. Many bills are lacking so that Genest's list is not complete. Gaps might perhaps be filled by reference to the daily papers of the time, but these are not accessible to me.

Macbeth, Tempest, King Lear, Henry IV (Part I and Part II), Julius Caesar, Merry Wives, Measure for Measure, Jew of Venice, Othello. Timon of Athens, Henry VIII, Hamlet, Richard III, Troilus and Cressida, Careless Husband (Cibber), Cato (Addison), All for Love (Dryden), Provoked Wife (Vanbrugh), Silent Woman (Jonson), Volpone (Jonson), Alchemist (Jonson), Country Wife (Wycherley), OEdipus (Dryden and Lee), Old Bachelor (Congreve), Beggar's Opera (Gay), Drummer (Steele), Venice Preserved (Otway), Double Dealer (Congreve), Recruiting Officer (Farquhar), Mourning Bride (Congreve), Provoked Husband (Vanbrugh and Cibber), Constant Couple (Farquhar), Fair Penitent (Rowe), Way of the World (Congreve), Oronooko (Southerne), Jane Shore (Rowe), Tender Husband (Steele; with Mrs. Oldfield), Provoked Wife (with Mrs. Oldfield; her last performance, according to Curll; Genest, III, 259), Conscious Lovers (Steele), Plain Dealer (Wycherley), The London Merchant (Lillo).

The period included is November 11, 1728, to October, 1730, and January 27, 1733, to May 24, 1734.

It is to be noted that among the important tragedies of Shakespear not appearing are Romeo and Juliet, and Antony and Cleopatra (probably supplanted by Dryden's All for Love); among the comedies missing are: Twelfth Night, the Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It, etc. It must not be concluded from the above list that others may not have been given for which the bills are now missing, nor that Prévost saw more than perhaps a relatively small number of those mentioned. Troilus and Cressida may be Dryden's reworking.

VITA

I was born August 25, 1890, at Shelter Island Heights, New York. After the usual preparatory studies at the local high school and at Wilbraham Academy in Massachusetts, I entered Amherst College in the fall of 1909. On the completion of my course in January, 1913, I taught in the High School at Roselle Park, New Jersey, until June, when I received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Amherst College. During the following year I taught English and French in the Riverview Military Academy, Poughkeepsie, New York. In the fall of 1914 I entered the Johns Hopkins University, where I have continued my work for three years, studying French, Spanish, and Italian. During my residence at the University I have held the Elliott Scholarship, a University Scholarship, and a University Fellowship, and have followed courses under Professors Armstrong, Brush, Carcassonne, Dargan, Lovejoy, Marden, Shaw, and Dr. Buceta, to all of whom it gives me pleasure to express my appreciation of their help and encouragement.

George R. Havens.

Baltimore, June, 1917.

MACON, PROTAT FRÈRES, IMPRIMEURS

MACON, PROTAT FRÈRES, IMPRIMEURS.